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# Woodshed

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## **Abstract**

What remains of the mouse moonlights as tender sprig of little bluestem, ribboning the owl's kack as if to appease the happy gods with gifts of tufted fur and white lie...

## **Cover Page Footnote**

Woodshed was originally published at *Booth*.



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# BOOTH



## A JOURNAL

October 30, 2015

## Woodshed

by Kevin Stein

What remains of the mouse moonlights as tender sprig of little bluestem, ribboning the owl's kack as if to appease the happy gods with gifts of tufted fur and white lie. A trinity, the moon and owl and me, rhyme like lefts and rights cuffing ears. Dickinson claims she likes a look of agony—You believe that stuff? She'd swoon for this wan moon and my teenage face beneath the Westside Kings' hammering fists, the poor boy's bounced check. Thumbing the big guy's eyes my teachers called a working-class hall pass. Rhymed that too. The mouse went down like this: furious scurrying, then talons and flower stalks, dinner swallowed whole. I've been the one on wing, not the trembling beneath, as you have, too—in bed doing that so-rough good stuff or at work dishing pink slips, maybe in line behind a woman fingering food stamps, your pricey power shoes tap-tapping. Feels good, huh, to be a mean son of a bitch. Mostly I've been the one chased and cornered, as now, when I unlatch the woodshed, mice skitter, marbles sprung by moonlight's thumb in the eye. Want to poke fun at how they sleep and screw and nurse their hairless young while an owl looms in the lone white pine, waiting? Want to call them tiny fools? What good is art that won't light a fire? Let's call them brothers, kin beneath the patient beak.

Kevin Stein has published eleven books of poetry, criticism, and anthology, most recently the collection *WRESTLING LI PO FOR THE REMOTE* (Fifth Star Press, 2013) and the essays *POETRY'S AFTERLIFE: VERSE IN THE DIGITAL AGE* (University of Michigan Press, 2010). His work has appeared in journals such as *American Poetry Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Poetry*, and *Southern Review*. He currently serves as Illinois poet laureate.

